

[Introduction to Meditation](#) > [Meditation Instructions](#) > [Beginner Lovingkindess](#) > [Retreats](#)

**Our approach to Buddhist Studies:** The first thing we do is we start the student meditating. Begin with one of the following kinds of meditations:

## Meditate

Recommended:

1. Loving-Kindness instructions [Metta](#) (**The Brahma Viharas**) **Video Instructions** -(95% of our students do the Metta Practice)- **Start with 30min per day. Precepts** are important in this practice and this is why.-[Listen 20min talk](#)

Not Recommended but we do teach:

2. **On-the-Breath** Meditation [Anapanasati](#) Video Instructions (If you have followed breathing in another tradition we recommend you go with Metta otherwise you may be confused by how Bhante has changed this technique to what the Suttas teach.) Breathing meditation is only appropriate for a small number students who have problems doing Metta. Both of these will lead you to the experience of Nibbana and this is our goal. Bhante has suggested the Brahma Viharas is fastest (Metta).

[Forgiveness Meditation](#) (to be used as a stepping stone practice when there are difficulties with your Metta practice). Please do Metta as your main meditation but if you think you need forgiveness then you may add that.

**When Hindrances arise you will learn to deal with them using the 6 R's.** [Study them closely.](#)

Include some [Walking Meditation](#)

## Watch, Listen and Read

Pick up a [BOOK](#) by Bhante or watch a [Video on Youtube.](#)

Start listening to the Guide Book on how to do TWIM on this [page](#)

Go to our extensive [Talks page](#) where all of the talks in Video and Audio are listed. Some have transcripts.

You could [Jump in and do a retreat](#) in Missouri or elsewhere. **Check our schedules.**

**Perhaps you just want to watch a Public Talk where Bhante describes what he teaches and how it differs from other teachers - [HERE](#)**

## More...

**All meditations do not lead to the same results.** If this were true one could take a road map and every road would lead to the same place! Also if this was so then the Buddha would not have done anything significant. But he did.

The fact is that he ran an experiment and there is enough information for you to run this same experiment following his instructions to come up with the same results. A person can free themselves from a tremendous amount of physical and mental suffering in this very lifetime if not all of it!

At the time of the Buddha's death, his followers were told to carry on his teachings. They were directed to "always" test any future teachings or writings that were declared to be the Buddha's teachings over

the pursuing years. Their instructions were to hold these teachings ( and all commentaries as well) beside the suttas to verify them for accuracy. The monastics were also told to test their understanding through their own experimentation and investigation. If their results matched the results described within the suttas, then they should be considered the Buddha's teaching or *BUDDHISM*.

This being said, there are three parts to studying Buddhism. Generosity and Morality (Sila), Meditation (Bhavana), and Wisdom (Pa~n~naa).

**If the meditation is going to work properly, One MUST have in place a firm foundation** of generosity and morality towards people. This generosity means acting in wholesome ways towards others through your mind, speech and actions Everything should come from the heart. If this is firmly in place for a person then they are ready for the Practice of Meditation. As in the original setting with the Buddha and the monks, one listens to Dhamma talks, sits in meditation and then contemplates to develop insights and to question the guiding teacher and move on to the next step. Each day after sitting and walking in meditation, one contemplates the insights that have arisen, letting them sink in and asking questions of the guiding teacher which is the key for good progress.

If studying long-term at the center, it is not surprising to hear the teacher ask that all reading stops for one year of doing the practice. After establishing a very solid practice of meditation and listening to the Dhamma, reading may resume. In the beginning, however, it is best to 'stop the thinking mind' and go sit. In the time of the Buddha there were no books. Going back to this idea in a similar setting of forestland seems to have great results.

How to Study the Meditation. For the clearest understanding of the Dhamma, after firmly committing to the foundation of morality, all the time in our life, one moves on to establish a successful practice of the meditation. One goes back as close to the Buddha's words as possible to find out what he did. Steadily, each day during in-depth training, one listens to the Dhamma being taught "directly from the suttas" by a guiding teacher who understands how to present the information clearly in direct relationship with the meditation. Gradually, this helps to clear the mind as the student begins to understand this is a meditation to do ALL THE TIME.

Along with this practice, which is ongoing subtle insight, **one begins to develop Wisdom.** Wisdom is the understanding of the impersonal process of Dependent Origination and the Four Noble Truths which is at the heart of the Buddhist teaching. As the texts tell us in the Vinaya, "one who understands Dependent Origination, always understands the three characteristics; one who understands the three characteristics however does not always come to understand Dependent Origination."

This is where insight begins to surface in tandem with the practice of Tranquility meditation as directed in the suttas. One begins to realize that points being heard in Dhamma talks are gradually being seen in meditation and realized through contemplation during and following the meditation sessions.

Although one gets curious, studying through reading and research, is only appropriate later on and will be more successfully understood without confusion after the student begins to understand more about the actual difference there is in experiential learning and academic learning. By the time the student opens up a book in this training, he/she will be acclimated to the Sutta language, the scenes and people of the Buddha's time and the subjects being discussed will no longer be strange. The Dhamma talks and Meditation practice combined have helped to lay the groundwork for and "Oh Wow!" experience, or a bright clear understanding.

Questions go on constantly during the training! This support system is one of the best parts.

**Examining original texts; Reading from other sources of information** about Buddhism such as the history, and commentarial viewpoints that were later developed on subjects that effect our daily lives should be done only after the establishment of a firm meditation practice. When studying the commentary, we need always to keep in mind that the suttas are our primary source and check to see if

the commentarial viewpoints are in agreement with the suttas and are workable for the meditation practice.

This approach is not always adhered to in this day and time and may be different from other approaches. One has to experience this technique in a fully devoted way with an open mind for a reasonable length of time ( 7 days to a year) to fully appreciate the difference it can make in the practice and in one's perspective of the world in everyday life.

After a year you may want to broaden your study by including other resources from our site.

Long story short, this approach definitely supports the idea that we, as a modern men/women, can still find the original path that was taught within the sutta texts, develop and follow it in this day and time and reach a full liberation of the mind. One can wake up from the dream, see *HOW* things actually do work and what the true nature of everything is. One *CAN REACH NIBBANA* .

As this website grows, we are offering several ways to study through these pages. We hope you find them helpful to your understanding.

**BOOKS:**For English translation study, after about 1-2 years of listening to Dhamma talks from the suttas, investigating through personal meditation, and discussing Dhamma with a guiding teacher, without reading on your own yet, then we suggest getting these books one at a time:

- **Majjhima Nikaya**, Middle Length Sayings by Bhikkhu Bodhi and Bhikkhu Nanimoli- You can get it through Amazon for from \$29 on kindle and 35\$ hardcover.  
" ... the richest variety of contextual settings with the deepest and most comprehensive assortment of teachings....." from the book flap. "...regarded by the Theravada school of Buddhism as the definitive recension of the Buddha-word, and among scholars too it is generally considered our most reliable source for the original teachings of the historical Buddha Gotama." from the introduction. This book is considered to contain a complete teaching.
- **Samyutta Nikaya** by Bhikkhu Bodhi
- **Digha Nikaya** by Maurice Walshe  
These books published by: [www.wisdompubs.org](http://www.wisdompubs.org) All are available here through [Amazon](http://Amazon).

**Listening to Dhamma Talks** Bhante Vimalaramsi gives some very special Dhamma talks most often from the Majjhima Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi. This book is a considered to have the complete teaching. Most suttas studied pertain directly to the practice of meditation. Students gather around him as he reads directly from various Suttas and encourages close examination of the meaning. He encourages your investigation and testing during meditation. With his guidance, students examine the precise applicable meaning from Pali words to the most appropriate English words. Then as individuals they investigate this information by applying it within their own practice. After their direct investigation they check results with the teacher and review the Suttas again. It is very important to practice by direct experience which develops into direct knowledge as described within the Suttas. This was the experiential training the Buddha promoted. It was a new approach at that time.Suttas are sometimes difficult to understand without this kind of assistance. The meaning of Pali words does not easily carry over into English words that lead to working situations. By following this method, we stay as close as possible to the directions for the meditation given to the original group of monks and nuns. This is a wonderful experience to be taught in this traditional fashion.

Because of descriptions of previous meditation experiences that were left in the texts for us, one gets in touch with what to expect at different levels of the practice. One feels comfortable with the progress and can always touch base with our guide to confirm this or that development to stay on track. The consistency of the guide's directions and the text's information is comforting throughout the experience of training and builds confidence in the students when there is no conflicting information.

To listen to these talks, please go to [Dhamma Talks Library](#) . If an accompanying transcript is also available there will be a link for you. We encourage you to download these files and to make copies of them onto CDs for distribution.

Please visit the other links for beginner resources from the menu above.